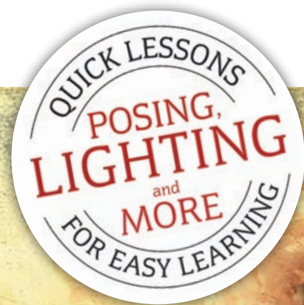
Fine Art Portrait Photography



Lighting, Posing & Postproduction from Concept to Completion





Nylora Bruleigh
M.Photog.Cr., CPP



Nylora-Joy Bruleigh, *M.Photog.Cr., CPP*, had owned a successful photography studio specializing in "Bellies and Babies" portraits for ten years when she felt she needed to change it up a bit. She was inspired by other artist's fine art imagery and decided that this was the direction she wanted to take. She began by researching work that truly inspired her and was fortunate to have opportunities to study and learn from some of these people. She began focusing on a variety of different photographic techniques, diving deeper into Photoshop, and taking many notes of her dreams that she would later use to design her photographic images.

In 2009, her style started to change and she began creating what is best described as rich, romantic images using vintage clothing and props. Nylora has specialized in creating outfits made from different materials, such as plastic and paper, and uses both natural and man-made materials in her work.

In 2012, Nylora earned both her Master of Photography and Photographic Craftsman Degrees from Professional Photographers of America. She was one of only three photographers to receive both degrees that year and she earned the Silver Photographer of the Year. She currently holds the title of New Hampshire Professional Photographer of the Year. She is the recipient of multiple Fuji Masterpiece and Kodak Gallery Awards, and was a Top 10 Finalist in the Portrait Category for the National Grand Imaging Award in 2012. In 2014, Nylora earned the title "Photographer of the Year" for both the Photographic Open and Master Artist categories through PPA's International Print Competition.

Currently, she is enjoying teaching and sharing her knowledge with others through private classes as well as workshops around New England. Nylora feels this is only the beginning and is looking forward to seeing what the future holds for her. She resides in her hometown of Concord, NH, with her extremely supportive husband, two amazing children, and her dog, Lady Pen Pen of Partridge. She enjoys Sunday family dinners at her mom and dad's house with her siblings, nieces, and nephew. To learn more, visit www.photographybynylora.com.

Published by:
Amherst Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 586
Buffalo, N.Y. 14226
Fax: 716-874-4508
www.AmherstMedia.com

Publisher: Craig Alesse
Senior Editor/Production Manager: Michelle Perkins
Associate Editor: Barbara A. Lynch-Johnt
Associate Publisher: Kate Neaverth
Editorial Assistance from: Carey A. Miller, Sally Jarzab, John S. Loder
Business Manager: Adam Richards
Warehouse and Fulfillment Manager: Roger Singo

ISBN-13: 978-1-60895-767-5
Library of Congress Control Number: 2014933307
Printed in The United States of America.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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A Study in Threes

Scouting Locations

This is a nature-based image with three trees, three shapes (bushes), three chairs, and three young women. The posing started with the three girls sitting on a rock. I kept moving them around in various positions until I perfected this pose, which felt good to me. The girls all seem connected in some way; they may be sisters or friends, but they are definitely not strangers. Their pose also mimicked the shape of the bushes in the image, keeping with the "three" theme.

Scouting out locations before the day you plan to photograph your subjects is essential for a successful session. Be familiar with the location, how the light falls on the area, and be aware of any obstructions before you begin photographing. When scouting for locations, be sure to check them out at the same time as your scheduled portrait session due to the changing light during the course of the day. Lighting can be adjusted in post-processing, but it is best to start with the optimum lighting conditions.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/11 at 1/125 second with a 105mm lens and an ISO of 400.

Postproduction

To create the look I wanted, I used Photoshop to flip the existing chairs and add one more. I selected the chairs with the Lasso tool and copied and pasted them. Using the Free Transform tool, I grabbed the left side of the box and dragged it beyond the right side of the selection box; this flipped the selected area. Next, I used the Move tool to reposition the chairs over the original.



"The girls all seem connected in some way; they may be sisters or friends, but they are definitely not strangers."



I duplicated the new chair layer by dragging it onto the Create New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. I positioned the chairs again and erased two of them so there were now three chairs facing the girls.

Using the Clone Stamp tool and sampling the branches of the trees in the background of the image, I carefully cloned out the thin tree on the left side of the middle bush. I selected, copied, and pasted the large tree on the far side of the image, moved it to the right side of the middle bush, and erased everything except for the tree. The last step was to choose a warmer texture to lay over the image and select the Overlay blending mode in the layers palette. Adding textures warmed the image and also made the chairs look old and rusty.

Dancer in the Park

Working Without a Plan

This was one of those rare times that I went into a session without knowing what direction I wanted to take with the model. I decided to dress her up, improvise without a plan, and see what happened. I dressed her in a vintage bustier and made a headpiece out of tulle. I used a mix of extra tulle to fluff up her skirt, which was made out of fabric I wrapped around her.

Using Photoshop to Complete the Image

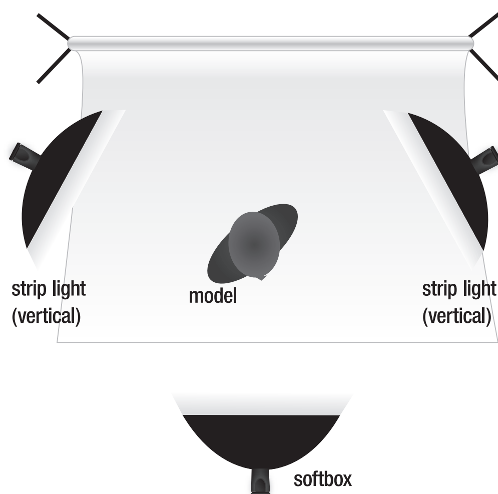
In postproduction, I puffed up her hair, gave her a slight pinch in the waist to add to her curves, rounded out the bottom of the skirt, and added shading underneath it. Most of the changes were made using Photoshop's Liquify or Warp tools.



Camera Information

I created the model's image with a Nikon D700 set at f/11 at 1/250 second with an 18mm lens and an ISO of 400 on a white seamless background.

I dropped in a photo I had of one of my park scene backgrounds and played with the opacity and blending mode until I liked it, erasing what I did not need using a layer mask. I topped it off with writing over the top of the entire image and erased what I did not want on her skin and brought the opacity way down. That texture also added a nice warm glow to her skin.





Elegant Egrets

Setup and Lighting

I created this image in two stages. First, I photographed my model in my backyard studio under a white pop-up canopy. A 4x6-foot silver reflector was to the left of the camera and a black scrim was to the right of the camera. I photographed the location portion of the image at a Florida river with trees, water, and Spanish moss in natural light. This was originally taken as a stock photo for my collection.

Overcoming Photographer's Block

I could not sleep as I lay in bed the morning of the studio portion of this session; I thought about what I would do for this creative appointment. I had asked my assistant to save all the plastic and bubble-wrap that came in the boxes from my lab the previous months. I was not entirely sure what I was going to do with it at the time, but I knew it would be useful at some point; today was the



Camera Information

Model image exposure settings: f/7.1 at 1/160 second with a 24–70mm lens at 29mm and an ISO of 250.

Background image exposure settings: f/10 at 1/500 second with a 50mm lens and an ISO of 400.

day to pull it all out and make something special with it! I grabbed the box of plastic and some packing tape and went to work. I used the strips of plastic for the skirt, twisting one end and laying it on the tape that I had laid across the table. I made the top out of bubble wrap and I used one of the last strips of plastic to twist and place as a neck band to make it look like a halter top. I used one last piece of bubble wrap for her headband.

LucisArt

I used a LucisArt filter on the woman and flipped her position. The trees and water were then added as the background, erasing the parts I did not need. I also duplicated part of a tree to add to the top of the print to keep the viewer within the image. A slight vignette was added for the same reason. I added the water reflection and the rings around her feet as if she were standing there in the water and making ripples.





After the Carnival

Lighting

This little girl with balloons, lollipop, and vintage dress was photographed outdoors with midday natural light. I used the slight cloud cover to filter the sunlight.

Never Let a Four-Lane Highway Deter You

The model for this image was posed on an embankment adjacent to a busy, four-lane roadway where I stood in the median strip! I photographed upward, using the sky as a natural backdrop. I loved the scale and illusion of openness created in this image. I also loved the little weeds at her feet, so I chose to leave them in the final image. Instead of leaving the stripes in the lollipop, I chose to swirl it to soften it a bit. I wanted to keep this image light and airy and felt that the pastel pinks, blues, and greens added to the feeling I was seeking.

After the Photo Was Taken

I cropped out most of the grass on the side of the hill in post-processing, leaving just enough ground to stand on. Next, I tweaked the entire image using Photoshop's Levels sliders. Because the balloons were so light and were blending into the sky, I dragged the original image onto the Create New Layer icon in the Layers palette and changed the blending mode to Multiply, which darkened the entire image. I then clicked the Add Layer Mask icon (it looks like a rectangle with a circle in the middle). Using a large, soft brush, I painted on the layer mask to erase all the darkened grass and the girl, keeping the darkened balloons and sky. I then duplicated the layer again and used the Hue/Saturation control to reduce the saturation of the green and yellow tones in the image. I created another layer mask and erased out what I did not need desaturated.

I dropped in a darker part of the sky from another image and changed the blending mode to Multiply again, lowering the opacity to where it looked real. Lastly, I dropped in a scratchy overlay over the entire image, to make it appear older and worn, and added a mat (choosing a blue from the lollipop).

Camera Information

I created this image with a Nikon D700 set at f/5.6 and 1/400 second with a 130mm lens and an ISO of 250.





He Loves Me Not

Camera and Lighting

I created this image with a Nikon D700 outside on my deck in January with natural, midday sunlight. I used an 18mm lens. Because the subject was being posed near bright, white snow, we used black scrims to one side of the Underwater Visual Imaging Tank to add some shadow to her light skin. Using the black background also helped to add some shadow (depth) around the edges of the subject and in the bends and curves of her body.

Dealing with the Elements

After placing a black sheet for the background and filling the Underwater Visual Imaging Tank with hot water siphoned from my hot tub, I posed the model in a vintage dress and floated cheesecloth and flowers around her upper body to keep the viewer's eyes focused on her head and neck area. We wanted to work quickly because it was so cold—we could even see the model's breath!

I photographed the model from a stepladder, pointing down on the subject and slightly to the left. *Very important note:* Always use a camera strap when photographing down on a model to keep your equipment from falling on your model or into the water!

Flips and Textures

I added textures to warm the edges and I warmed her skin tone. The headpiece was created by copying multiple floating flowers and arranging them around her head. The first time I entered this image in competition, one of the judges was critical of the model's smile, so for the final look seen here, I turned the model upside down and added a frown. I also flipped the image horizontally. I felt this led the viewer from her feet, down her body to her face in the lower right corner.

Camera Information

My camera was set at f/7.1 and 1/125 second and an ISO of 200.







Gayann in Milk #1

Lighting

I created this image with a Nikon D800 in my outdoor studio with natural light from an open sky filtered through a tree canopy.

Camera Information

My camera was set at f/4.5 and 1/200 second with a 24–70mm lens at about 28mm and an ISO of 320.

Photographing a Model Submerged in Milk

I created the model's dress from cheesecloth and posed her in my Underwater Visual Imaging Tank filled with milk and water. I asked my model to melt into the ground, becoming completely relaxed, as I photographed her directly in front at ground level using a white background.

The cropped pose I created takes the viewer up her back to her face, down her leg to her hand, back up her arm to her face and around and around while keeping the viewer focused on the center of interest of the image. I had given myself an assignment to do something different with the stark black & white image and this was my favorite. Adding warmth and darkness to this image was completely the opposite of my original plan, which was to keep everything around her white against her dark skin (see the next section for an example of this look).



Adding Textures

When you add a texture layer to an image, you will see it in the Layers palette. With the texture layer active, at the top of that same palette you will also see the blending modes menu. If you click on the arrow in that box, a menu will pop up with a list of names such as Darken, Multiply, Color Burn, Lighten, Color, and Dodge. Each setting will have a different effect on the look of your texture. Some will change the look dramatically, while others will make subtle changes.

I love playing with these because it can completely change your existing image. You can use multiple textures all at different blending modes and opacities to be completely creative and produce several looks for the same image. For this image, I added the following textures to give the



image an overall warm, rich feeling: a red layer (Multiply mode at 86 percent opacity, 65 percent fill); a brown layer (Overlay mode at 100 percent opacity); and a gray layer (Linear Burn mode at 100 percent opacity and 88 percent fill). I hardly ever just "drop" a single texture over an image.

As you can see, I tend to use multiple textures all set at different styles (*i.e.,* Multiply, Overlay, Linear Burn, etc.). You never know what each texture will do to an image, so it's worth trying everything—you can always delete it if you do not like it. I believe that as artists, we should all get creative!

Gayann in Milk #2

Camera and Lighting

I created this image with a Nikon D800 in my outdoor studio with natural light from an open sky filtered through a tree canopy.

Camera Information

My camera was set at f/4.5 and 1/200 second with a 28mm lens and an ISO of 320.



Cheesecloth and Milk

My model was swathed in cheesecloth and posed in my Underwater Visual Imaging Tank filled with milk. This was part of my black & white series; I was trying to create images in black & white that were clean, crisp, sharp, detailed, artistic, and simple. They were to be images with a lot of contrast using extreme posing. The exercise was to see how many looks we could get photographing at different angles and using different poses within the tank's space—using one outfit, one lens, and one location.

Postproduction

The first thing I did was go into Curves and play with the sliders to brighten the whites and darken the darks. I cloned out all of the wrinkles in the background and gently retouched her skin; I also used a little LucisArt filtration to give some dimension to her skin and hair. The image was changed to black & white using Nik Software.

"The exercise was to see how many looks we could get photographing at different angles and using different poses within the tank's space—using one outfit, one lens, and one location."



The Princess and the Pea

Backstory

I had this canopy bed all decked out for a day of back-to-back sessions—so it seemed like a perfect time to do the "Princess and the Pea" photograph I imagined for my Fairytale series. I searched through my Facebook friends to see who might be available and made a call to a neighbor. Minutes later, she walked through my door and dressed in a gown from my collection!

With only twenty minutes to work before my next scheduled portrait session, I created eight different poses—plenty of options from which to choose. It was dark by the time my sessions for the day were done, so I had to photograph the different mattresses the next day. Unfortunately, the light was much different, but I made it work. I photographed the bed as it was, then I took the canopy off the top and photographed that. Next, I took the lights off the posts and photographed that. Finally, I shot the bed with different sheets on it (seven different colors). These images made up the layers of mattresses in the final image.

Camera Information

Bed image exposure settings: f/4.5 at 1/60 second with a Nikon AFS Nikkor 28–300 f/3.5 lens set at 28mm and an ISO of 640

Model image exposure settings: f/4 at 1/60 second with a Nikon AFS Nikkor 28–300 f/3.5 lens set at 28mm and an ISO of 500.

Lighting and Shooting

The model's image was created with the windows behind the bed, two 4x6-foot windows flanking the bed, and three skylights on the ceiling. I shot the bed images from a tripod so that the camera did not move between the changing of the sheets. This made post-processing much easier.

Layers, Layers, and More Layers

In Lightroom, I tagged my favorite sheets from each of the variations and made the same adjustments (sizing and color) to each before exporting them to Photoshop. Next, I selected around the mattress in each image and cut/pasted it into the













main image for the bed and the room. Using Free Transform, I made each mattress thinner so that I could have many mattresses on the bed. To make them all appear different, I flipped some and changed the colors of others using the Replace Color function (under Image > Adjustments).

I chose the image of the girl and the blanket she was sitting on, then cut/pasted her onto the mattresses. I made minor changes to her hair and used the Imagenomic Portraiture plug-in on her skin. To make the room look larger, I made selections on the top, bottom, and sides and transformed them by pulling each selection outward. I also made the curtains taller, giving the appearance of a large room with just the bed in it.

I brought the flattened image into Alien Skin Exposure 4. I wanted this to have an antique feel to it and the AgfaColor Neu filter gave an overall green cast to the image. I played with the color/tone sliders until I found what I liked. Feeling it was a bit too "clean," I dragged a couple of texture layers into the image until it was perfect.

Little Miss Perfect

Camera and Lighting

This image was created in my studio with a Nikon D800. I used a 4x6-foot softbox and a 4x6-foot silver reflector.

Camera Information

My camera was set at f/13 at 1/250 second and an ISO of 400 with a 48mm lens.

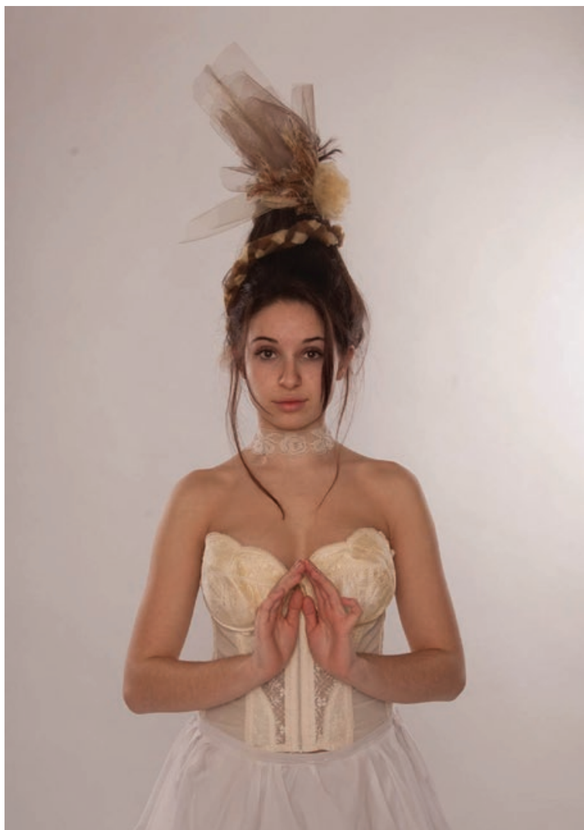
It Is All About Direction

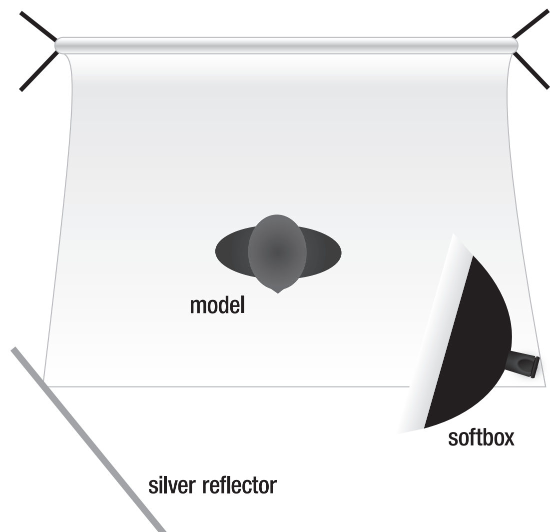
I asked the model to look directly into the camera lens. I loved the look of her perfect eyes and her hair up—with not a hair out of place. The title seemed appropriate. This photograph is simple, yet deep. I cropped it very tight to perfectly center the subject.

Postproduction

The image was split in half and then I rejoined it. To flip it, I made a selection of half of the image, then cut and pasted that side. Using Photoshop's Free Transform, I grabbed the outside edge of the image and dragged it over to the other side of the entire image; this flipped it over. I copied one eyeball and moved it to the other side so that the catchlight is on the same side in both eyes.

The last step was using the Eraser tool with a soft brush to blend the two halves gently. I added more makeup to the model, as well as shadows and highlights. This photograph earned me a Master Court of Honor for Best Portrait at a New Hampshire Professional Photographers Association convention.



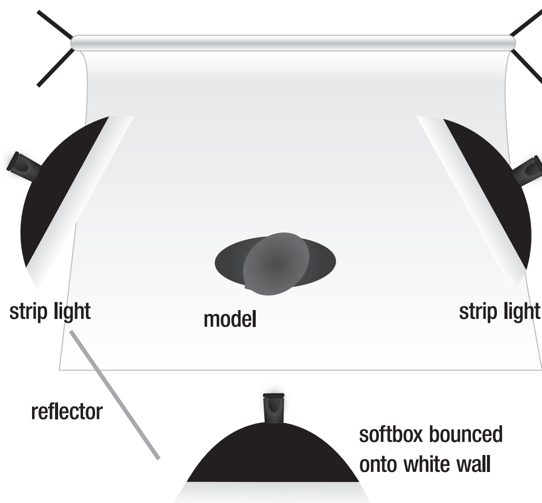




Afternoon Picnic

Subject and Location

The young woman in the picnic scene was photographed in my studio on a white seamless background with a red-and-white checkered tablecloth, a picnic basket, napkins, a plate of chocolate chip cookies, and plastic wine glasses.



Camera Information

My camera was set at f/11 and 1/320 second with a 22mm lens and an ISO of 250.

Lighting

I placed a 4x6-foot Photogenic 1250 Power Light softbox behind me, bouncing it off a white wall at f/5.6 with one reflector and two 12x56-inch White Lightning Ultra 1200s with Amvona strip lights attached. Both lights were placed behind the woman and angled toward her, with one on each side set at f/8.

Composition

This image is part of a series I created for a vintage clothing store's advertising campaign. My model was a perfect fit for the subject in the ad.

I am a collector of vintage clothing and props. I saw this outfit and I thought of a picnic theme,



“This image is part of a series I created for a vintage clothing store's advertising campaign . . .”



so I pulled out the tablecloth and picnic basket, napkins and plates, which all add to the overall theme. The model's natural expressions and poses were the finishing touch. By placing her feet in the left side of the image, the viewer is guided into the photograph, up to her face, down her arm to the basket and plate, back to her legs, and back up to her face—keeping the attention within the image.

Adding Textures

In post-processing, I added a slight texture to warm the overall image. I also used an orange overlay with the layer blending mode set to Color and the opacity at 50 percent to warm it up, giving the image a very real vintage feeling.

Swimmin' with the Fishes

Lighting

This image was created with a Nikon D700 in my studio using a white seamless background and 12x56-inch strip lights plus a 4x6-foot softbox.

Camera Information

My camera was set at f/11 at 1/250 second and an ISO of 400 with an 18mm lens.

Working with a Dancer

The model is a dancer with fabulous hair; I had her go through a series of jumps as I tried to capture her in midair, giving her the appearance of floating or swimming.



The Feeling of Being Underwater

I added a layer of blue and a texture that gave the image an underwater feel. I used a filter to ripple the surface of the water and added a vignette to give it the illusion of darkness with light (or sun) coming through the water. As I was completing the post-processing, I thought I would add to the interest and drama by including a shark in the distance, paying close attention to how the light played on the shark's back to match the light on the model.

I found the royalty-free shark image on-line and dropped it into the background of the main shot, moving it around until I felt it was in the correct position. I added some blur so it would seem realistic at that distance and looking at it through the water.

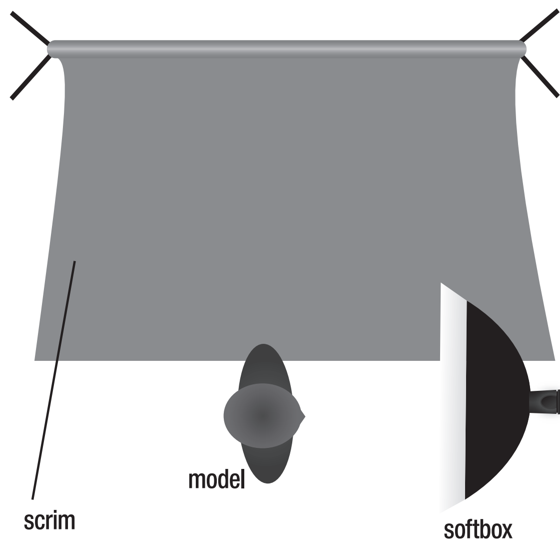
"I thought I would add to the interest and drama by including a shark in the distance . . ."



In the Balance

Camera and Lighting

I created this image with a Nikon D700 in my studio. I photographed the model against a 4x6-foot softbox set at f/5.6 and a David Maheu "Soft Focus Brown" background.



Camera Information

My camera was set at f/5.6 and 1/200 second and an ISO of 400 with a 35mm lens.

Cheesecloth and Belly

I wrapped the expectant mother's belly in cheesecloth that I had dyed, using a color that would complement the background I planned to use. I chose to highlight her belly and put her backside into shadow. However, lighting the background correctly made the shape of her bottom stand out without lighting up her skin.

Accenting the Belly

I tilted the image slightly to accent her belly and backside for a balanced effect. The final image was flipped so the light was coming in from the left of the image onto her belly.



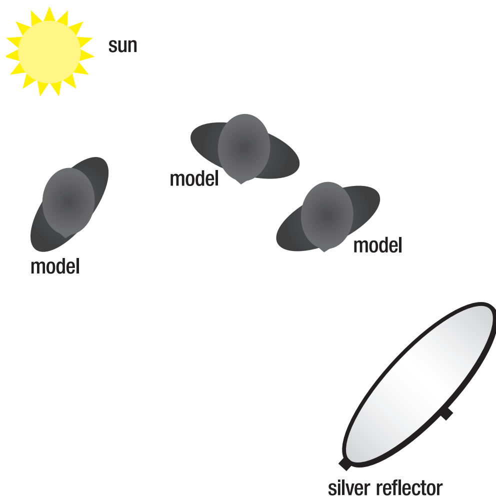


“I wrapped the expectant mother’s belly in cheesecloth that I had dyed, using a color that would complement the background I planned to use.”

Three Graces

Lighting

Although we were in open shade on the edge of the woods and had the sky reflecting off the surface of the water, I had my husband hold a silver reflector off to my right on the edge of the pond, to pop just a bit of light back to the models' faces.



Camera Information

My camera was set at f/8 and 1/200 second with an ISO of 400. I used a 250mm lens setting.

Re-Creating an Early 20th Century Summer Afternoon

The three young women were posed in vintage dresses and slips in this beautiful, wooded garden setting. I had scouted the area the week before the session. When I found this location, I knew that this log is where the models needed to be.

The model in the center is standing to create the captivating triangle that keeps the viewer's gaze in



"Using the trees as a leading line, I chose an elongated crop to place the models in the right one-third of the image."



the image. My objective was to have it appear as if the one standing was just spending some time with friends from the 1920s or 1930s on a lazy, summer afternoon.

Giving the Image a Vintage Effect

The photograph was converted from color to black & white and, ultimately, sepia tone to give it a vintage feel. I duplicated the original layer and used the Multiply blending mode when making this edit. Lastly, I used a layer mask and a soft brush to erase the darkness around the models, bringing the viewer's eye right to the subjects. Using the trees as a leading line, I chose an elongated crop to place the models in the right one-third of the image.

Autumn Dreams

Lighting and Shooting

I created this image with natural light under a tree canopy with midday light in October. I photographed my model in the Underwater Visual Imaging Tank that my husband made for me outside my studio. I used a black tarp for a dual purpose; it was placed in the pool both to hold the water and to serve as the background. I sprinkled fallen leaves on the water to give the image an autumnal feeling.

Posing

The model's hands were placed behind her head, slightly elevating it out of the water because I wanted to keep her red hair color prominent. I posed her body in a curved way to give the image movement. Her arms were purposefully posed to frame her face, which keeps the viewer focused in the triangle of her head and arm region.



Camera Information

My camera was set at f/8 at 1/160 second with a 28mm lens and an ISO of 400.

Creating with Citra Solv

I used multiple textures and coordinating colors and tones. I copied one of the red leaves five times to make the wreath on her head. I laid out lighter layers to give her a skirt. I also used the natural reflection of the sky on the water surface.

Additionally, I added a texture that I created using Citra Solv®, a natural, all-purpose cleaner we purchase at our local health food store. To make a Citra Solv texture, I choose two pages from a *National Geographic* magazine and apply Citra Solv to them using a foam brush. Next, I lightly press the two wet pages together and let them sit for ten to fifteen minutes before gently peeling them apart. At this point, all of the ink will have blended together to make a great texture. I can then photograph them or scan them to use as textures over my images. You can visit their web site (www.citrasolv.com) and view the Artist Gallery for additional ideas and uses.

In this case, I chose a Citra Solv texture with red, blue, and oranges tones. I used it several times, each time erasing out a different portion of the texture. I used different blending modes on each texture layer that I applied to the image. (I used



one on Multiply, one on Overlay, and three in Normal mode—but at different opacities.)

When I first started using textures, it was hard to know when to stop. I recommend going with your gut instincts. If it feels good, and it feels done, leave it alone. You can always go back to the image later and, if it feels like it is missing something, play with it some more. Don't be afraid to experiment.

The Little Mermaid

Lighting

The model was in my Underwater Visual Imaging Tank, lit by the natural light coming through the hardwood tree canopy and one 4x6-foot silver reflector. The reflector was positioned at camera right and feathered just enough to pop light onto the shadow side of her face.



Camera Information

My camera was set at f/5 at 1/250 second and an ISO of 320 with a 75mm lens.

Preparation Is the Key

This portrait is from my Fairytale series. My mother made the mermaid outfit, including the sleeve and skirt, based on a vision I had. The model's top was created from seashells; we drilled holes in them and used a ribbon for straps. I curled her hair and added the makeup to produce a specific mermaid look I was seeking to achieve.

Posing

I posed the model's hands on the side of her face in a way that lengthened the area around her face, being very careful not to photograph into the back of her hand. The back of the hand, being the widest part, is the least flattering. This soft and pretty hand pose emphasized the eye contact between the mermaid and the viewer.

Filters, Overlays, and Other Tools—Oh My!

A reflection in the water was added using the Flood filter. The sky was added as another layer set to the Overlay blending mode; I carefully erased some off the bottom. The model's skin was smoothed and her tail was added by manipulating her skirt using the Clone and Liquify tools.



Fashion in Paris

Lighting

This image was created with two 12x56-inch strip lights set at f/8. A 4x6-foot softbox set at f/5.6 was directly behind me and the camera, about twelve feet from the model, who was standing on a white seamless background.

Personal Assignment in Cooperation with Local Businesses

My Vintage series was all "product" images for a local vintage clothing store. After we completed the assignment that the owner needed for her on-line sales catalog, I played to make the images mine, adding textures and vignettes, always trying to stay true to the feel of the image based on the clothing and the model's posing.

Have Fun with Your Textures

I used two overlays. The first was a bluish texture that I set on Overlay at 70 percent opacity over the entire image. The second overlay was a tan tone with a rustic vignette. I set that one to Multiply and left it at 100 percent opacity, which gave a great vintage look to the final image.

Have fun with your textures! Find one you like that you think might work well with your image. It can have a paper texture, a dirty grungy feel, colors that work well with you primary image, or you can use a texture that is desaturated so that you do not pick up any additional color and just have the texture itself. I feel that textures add depth and warmth to an image. Play with the opacity, play with the fill, play with the blend modes. Use many layers of textures and mix them up until you are happy with the look. Think about erasing the texture selectively where you don't need it.

I also suggest that you save and name your favorite combinations so that if you decide to use a look again, you can just drag and drop it on top of your photo, saving you a lot of time. If you do a series of images, the identical processing will also make them more cohesive.

Camera Information

My camera was set at f/9 at 1/200 second and an ISO of 250 with an 18mm lens.





Her Hideaway

Lighting

I created this image at an outdoor location with open sky. I added a 4x6-foot silver reflector to put some light on her face. The tree and dirt were so dark, she needed a little pop of light in the shadows.

Photographing in the Woods After a Microburst

This was created following a "microburst," a weather phenomenon defined as a sudden, powerful, localized air current, especially a downdraft. This one had winds of 86mph that literally pulled up a path of trees—some that were 50 feet tall—and just split others in half! When I saw the mess a mile from my house on Sunday morning, I knew we had to photograph immediately because it would be cleaned up on Monday.



Camera Information

My camera was set to f/7.1 at 1/320 second and an ISO of 400 with a 68mm lens.

I brought a vintage chair into the woods and placed it on the trunk of an uprooted tree, using the grassy upturned ground as the backdrop. This pose gave her great backlighting and, as noted, I used a silver reflector to brighten her face. The title of this image comes from the feeling that this location was a hidden spot because of the way the ground came up above her in the background.

Adding Textures and Overlays

I used multiple texture layers and colored overlays to add lots of depth and dimension to the final print.

> "When I saw the mess a mile from my house on Sunday morning, I knew we had to photograph immediately . . ."



Awaiting True Love's Kiss

Lighting

I photographed Snow White outdoors in a forested location. I used the backlighting from the setting sun through the trees and a 4x6-foot white reflector to pop some light back onto her face. The seven dwarfs were later photographed in my studio. I lit the boys as if the sun were coming in from the same direction/position as it did for Snow White in the woods. I knew I would be putting them into the original Snow White image during post-processing. Preplanning played a large part in lighting and posing the dwarfs.

Camera Information

Snow White image exposure settings: f/5.6 at 1/30 second with a 28mm lens and an ISO of 640.

Dwarf images exposure settings: f/8 at 1/200 second with a 35mm lens and an ISO of 250.

Bringing a Fairytale to Life

This Snow White scene is from my Fairytale series. I knew I wanted to include the seven dwarfs, but was not sure where I would find them. It took two days for it to dawn on me that I have been a baby photographer for the past ten years and had many little boys who would come in at the drop of a hat! To avoid a mad-house in the studio, I scheduled the shoots for two days and













had the parents bring the boys to me when it worked best for them.
I told the boys to wear dark pants and work boots and I would supply the rest. My mom made the smocks and the matching hats for me out of pieces of felt from the local fabric store. (I changed some of the colors later in Photoshop.)

I mapped out the poses and expressions ahead of time and made about twenty exposures of each boy, keeping the lighting the same for each one. A 4x6 softbox to camera right was the main light. Behind each subject and to camera right, a strip light was positioned for accent lighting. A silver reflector to camera left completed the setup.

Creating Continues After the Exposure Is Made

I cut/pasted each boy into the image using Photoshop, then added shadows to the ground and shading to the beards in post-processing—along with white eyebrows! I extended the table and smoothed the cloth, adding a texture so it appeared to be a stone platform. The coffin was added using a clear plastic display box. I rounded the top of this and I added a slight reflection. I also colored the bouquet. I used an image of a broom, in the Multiply blending mode, for texture and warmth over the entire image. I duplicated the texture in some places and erased the parts I did not need to add a bit of vignette.

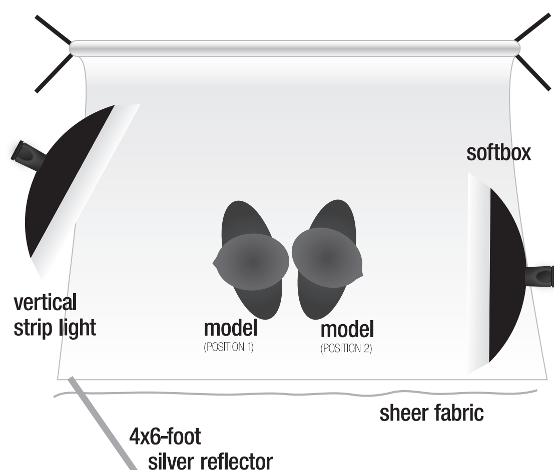
Ghostly

Photographing Through Sheer Fabric

I photographed this image through a sheer piece of fabric and used a long exposure with one model in two positions. I started with my subject, my daughter Sydney, in her left-side pose position. Then I counted to ten and had her change to her right-side pose position. This technique gave the image a very mystical feel—as if you are observing the subject's aura. Initially, my daughter was not thrilled to model for me, but upon discovering she was chosen to be in this book, she was ecstatic!

Camera Information

I created this image with a Nikon D700 in my studio at f/20 at 3 seconds with an 18mm lens setting and an ISO of 400.



Final Steps

In post-processing, I increased the contrast and converted the image to black & white. I added a layer of brown and set the blending mode to Color to give the image a sepia-toned look.



> “I photographed this image through a sheer piece of fabric and used a long exposure with one model in two positions.”



Unseen Masterpiece

Concept

This is an image from my Belly Couture collection; my model is wearing a beautiful gown that shows off her growing belly.

Lighting and Posing

Perfect portrait lighting is critical. I used two 12x56-inch strip lights, one on either side of the woman, and a 4x6-foot softbox to the left of the camera, approximately ten feet from the model. I carefully positioned the client's face and belly within the light to give her curves and make her look her best. Using a simple background made this image all about her for a very traditional and timeless portrait.

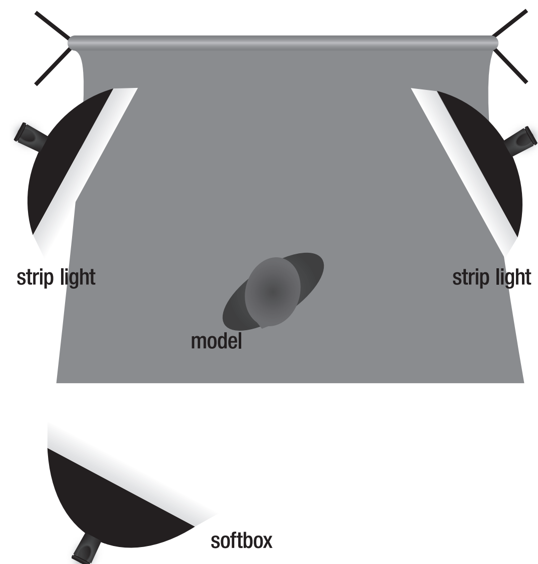


Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/5 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 200 with a 24–70mm lens at about 36mm.

Final Steps

In post-processing, I made a large selection around the woman with my Lasso tool and feathered it to 250 pixels. I inversed that selection and used the Curves to bring down the midtones and darken the area around the outside of the image for a nice vignette. I used the Imagenomic Portraiture plug-in to smooth out her skin, carefully erasing the effect from her eyes, lips, and mouth to keep them sharp. I also brought the opacity down enough that her skin did not look plastic.





Young Widow

Revisit Old Sessions

This image from my Fairytale series began as an image saved from a regular portrait session. I took the original image and began editing and using textures and building her dress.

The top of this dress was easily a hundred years old and was literally in shreds when I got it; one of the sleeves was almost falling off completely. It is not something that I would normally purchase, but the owner of the vintage clothing store I work with let me borrow it for a week to photograph it before she donated it to a local theatre group. I really was not sure what I was going to do with it, but I thought it was beautiful so I clipped and pinned it on my model long enough to make some images I could fix in Photoshop.

It is important to re-visit old sessions that have been sitting on your hard drive. If you are like me and continue learning new techniques in Photoshop, sometimes when you go back to an old image, you think of things to try that you may not have envisioned the first time you looked at it.

Lighting

Since I planned to split and flip the image in postproduction, my main concern was lighting it evenly. I used two 12x56-inch strip lights (one on either side of her). The right one was set at f/5.6 and the left one was set at f/8 with the 1250 White Lightning light (at approximately f/8) bouncing off the white wall behind me.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/8 at 1/160 second and an ISO of 250 and a 35mm lens.

A Work in Progress

I started with a straight-forward portrait and then I split the image in half, copied it, and flipped it over to the opposite side, blending the two sides together. I plumped up her hair using Liquify and added a gray streak up the front. The background was added in last.

I used a layer mask to erase out of the image anything I did not need. I also added the circling birds over her shoulder from another image in my files.







Angel

Creating the Image

I styled my model's hair and had her wear a vintage dress from my collection. Her friend held the wing up to her back during the session and I posed her balanced on a pedestal.

Camera Information

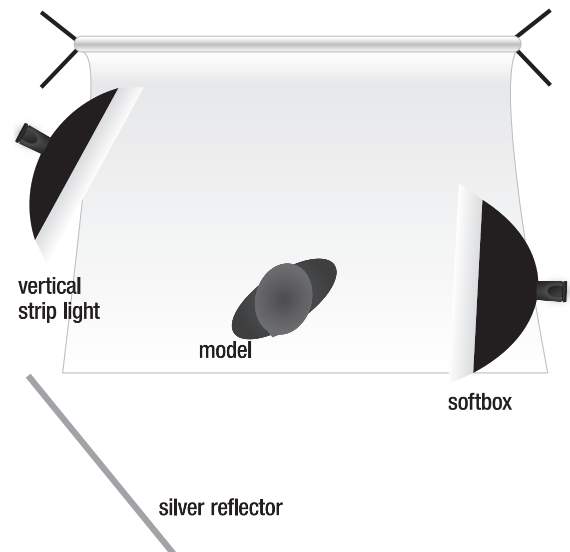
I created this image with a Nikon D700 set at f/7.1 and 1/160 second with an 18mm lens and an ISO of 250 with a light background in my studio.

What I Did in Photoshop

I made the wing larger in Photoshop and then duplicated it for the opposite side of her body. To remove her friend from the scene, I selected the background from the right side of the image and copy/pasted it, then flipped it over to the left side of the image, covering the girl and part of the wing. Using a large soft brush, I erased the edges of the selection. With a much smaller, hard-edged brush, I carefully erased the wing, taking care to leave the woman's arm covered by the background selection. I used the Patch tool to remove the wrinkles in the background.

In Photoshop, her up-do hairstyle was also made to look fuller. I added new makeup for her eyes, and applied the Imagenomic Portraiture plug-in to smooth her skin. Finally I added highlights and shadows to her clothing using the Dodge and Burn tools.







The Last Straw

Lighting

I photographed the original image at the edge of a tall, grassy area in midafternoon, under an open sky, using natural light. The location of the late-day sun gave me the flat lighting that was needed to capture the mood for this image.

Design and Posing

The model was wearing a vintage gown. I asked her to lie on the grass in a fetal position. I then laid a large bundle of twine-bound weeds on her back.

Postproduction

I cropped the photograph to eliminate several background distractions—namely, the car and parking lot in the upper left and the roof in the upper right. When these were no longer visible, I converted the image from color to black & white. I added contrast and warmed the overall image with a yellow overlay set to the Color blending mode. I brought the opacity of this layer down to finesse the final presentation.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set to f/13 at 1/50 second and an ISO of 800 with a 55mm lens.





“The location of the late-day sun gave me the flat lighting that was needed to capture the mood for this image.”

In the Garden

Styling and Posing

My model was wearing a vintage wedding gown with a long train and I had her pose on a table top that had been cut and placed on the ground. After working with her hair so it was combed and brushed the way I envisioned it, I posed her with her back arched slightly.

Location

The image was created at a garden estate near my home that is open to the public. It is always a special treat when you find a location like this that is unknown to most people.

Lighting

I used natural sunlight in the late morning with a 36-inch silver reflector placed to the right of the camera to light this image. The reflector was low, almost on the ground, for a little fill.

Camera Information

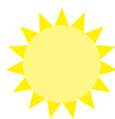
I created this image at 11:00AM with a Nikon D700 at a garden estate. My camera was set at f/9 at 1/320 second and an ISO of 200 with a 50mm lens.

Postproduction

I fogged the image with a vignette and brought the saturation down to give the image a more romantic feel.

I created two versions of this image during my post-processing. One had a colored mat and one had a white mat. I dragged the colored image onto the white background and brought the opacity down slightly to soften the overall image. I also felt that the lighter mat allowed the portrait to really pop—more like a museum piece.











"I fogged the image with a vignette and brought the saturation down to give the image a more romantic feel."

Cinderella

Using Columns

Cinderella is from my Fairytale series. It was taken at the top of a large staircase between two sets of tall columns. This setting felt very royal and castle-like to me. The full set of stairs was cropped out in this final image, but I felt the columns and the stairs brought the focus to Cinderella, keeping her as the center of interest.



Camera Information

I created this image in midafternoon with a Nikon D800 set at f/5.6 at 1/125 second with a 50mm lens and an ISO of 500.

Lighting

We shot at an outdoor location, using only the natural light.

Tight Cropping for Ultimate Effect

I cropped the image very tightly and very narrowly to eliminate the modern-looking glass doors in the left side of the original image. However, I felt the tall, thin pillars helped frame Cinderella.

Postproduction

I used a warm texture overlay that gave the image a canvas-like appearance.

"I felt the columns and the stairs brought the focus to Cinderella, keeping her in the center of interest."



Kindred Spirits

Lighting

Shooting in the studio, I used a 4x6 foot softbox with a 12x56 inch strip light.

Believe in Your Work

This is a Jennifer Hudson Thoreson–inspired image, one of the first I created after taking her class. The model's upper torso was wrapped in white cheesecloth and she wore a flapper slip. I posed her on a stump in my studio and used a bird as a prop for her left hand. I created a diagonal line from lower left to upper right with her right arm behind her and her left arm extended upward.



Camera Information

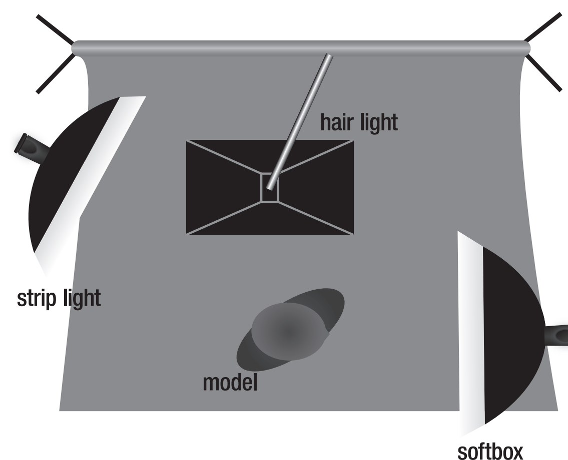
This image was created with a Nikon D700 set to f/6.3 at 1/160 second and an ISO of 250 with an 18mm lens.

Feedback

I thought this was a great image, but when I entered it in the New Hampshire state competition, some of the judges did not get it. My advice is if someone does not like a photograph you created, keep trying; if you love it, keep trying and if you believe in it, stand by it. If you are open to change, then go for it and remember it is all in the details.

Postproduction

I retouched her skin using the Imagenomic Portraiture plug-in. I also added a vignette by





making a new layer and using the Lasso tool to draw a large selection around the center part of the image. I feathered this selection about 200 pixels then went to Select > Inverse to choose the perimeter areas of the image around the subject. With this selection active, I chose a nice brown tone and filled the space with that color. I brought the opacity down to taste. The final stage was changing the entire image to a sepia tone.

Time to Go

Lighting

I used a 12x56-inch strip light to camera left and a 4x6-foot softbox to the right of the camera, approximately three feet from the model. I also placed a 4x6-foot silver reflector to camera left.

Tell the Story

As I was collaborating with a local vintage clothier about what I needed for this assignment, I started pulling from my collection some props that I felt worked well with the outfits; the vintage suitcase was a perfect addition. Her hat was made out of balled-up black tulle pinned to her hair.

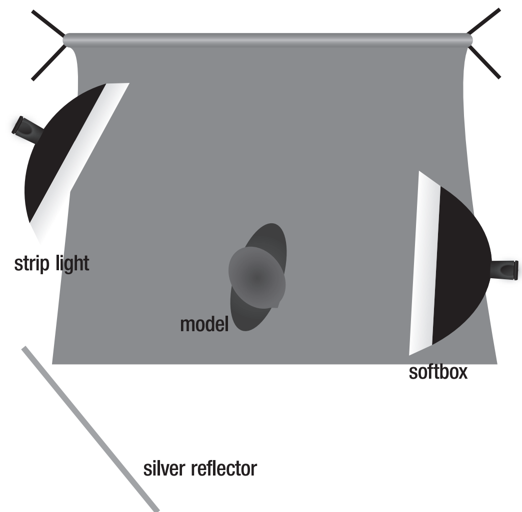
As I reviewed the images from this session, I began to see the story of a pauper—hence the bare feet and thoughtful expression. She has everything she owns with her in this little suitcase and is always ready for a train so she can move on to her next location.

Details Matter

When you are photographing for competition, details matter. Knowing that the judges can be picky about hands and feet, I copied part of her fingers from the hand that is visible in the original photograph and flipped it to have it appear as the second hand that is peeking out in the finished image. I added a grunge-looking texture, a cat (as if it were hers), the clock in her hat, a different background, and textures. I also blended in the arch behind her to make it look as though the model is waiting for an underground train.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/8.8 at 1/160 second and an ISO of 250 with an 18mm lens.







Becoming One with the Earth

Lighting

I photographed my model on location using open sky and no reflectors, as seen at the top of the facing page.

Setting

This image was created after a local storm ripped up many trees (we already saw another image from the same setting on page 38).

Posing

My model was a ballet dancer, so she had the natural grace and style needed for a pose that mimicked the tree. I knew that she would meld beautifully with this setting. I carefully had her arch herself over the roots and pulled-up earth that was in the foreground. I also had her cross her ankles and point her toes. Finally, I had her bring her arms up over her head, rounding her



elbows out and turning her shoulders toward me so as to not block her face. The final step was to have her close her eyes.

Postproduction

After playing with the color image for a while, I decided it would look more earthy and raw if I made it black & white, which I did using Nik Silver Effects Pro. Toggling through the auto settings in the program, I landed back on Neutral and then played with the brightness and contrast sliders. I tweaked it a little further with the Tone Curves until I liked the way it looked. The final step was to add a layer of warm brown with the blending mode set to Color and the layer opacity brought down just a little.



Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/9 and 1/32 second at an ISO of 400. I used a Nikon AFS Nikkor 28–300mm f/3.5 lens set at 40mm.



“After playing with the color image for a while, I decided it would look more earthy and raw if I made it black & white . . .”

Just Beyond Reach

Lighting, Posing, and Styling

I photographed the model at 10AM under an open sky with fill from a 4x6-foot silver reflector.

She wore a cheesecloth top and a flapper slip. I put her hair up, keeping it loose, and added feathers for a fun element. I directed her to stand on the vintage chair and reach for the highest apple.

Postproduction

After making the original capture (top right), I sat down to finesse it in Photoshop. To add sky, I selected the one that I felt best fit the scene and dragged it in to a layer above the main image. I flipped through the blending modes to find the one that would work best with this scene. I slightly erased the sky off the tops of the trees using a layer mask at a lower opacity.

I wanted this image to have an old-fashioned feel, but the colors were amazing so I decided not to make it black & white. I added a white mat, but it seemed too stark. Adding a warm texture overlay made it much better (bottom right). Sometimes I will try two or three different textures and mats before I find something I feel works! My favorite variation with this image is on the facing page.





Camera Information

Nikon D700 set at f/13 at 1/160 second and an ISO of 400 with a Nikkor 28–300 f/3.5VR lens set at 40mm.



Bound by Despair

Lighting

This image was shot in my studio using a 4x6-foot softbox to camera right and a 4x6-foot silver reflector to the left of the camera.

Styling and Posing

This was one of my first images using cheesecloth after spending three days on a seminar retreat with Jennifer Hudson Thoreson. I was excited about using all of the new ideas I had learned, so I started by wrapping the cheesecloth around the model's chest and then twisted the material around her right arm. I also used the material as a headband and created a "messed-up" hair style. After I created this setup, I started playing with different poses. I wanted her pose to be very strong with sharp angles, so I had her place her hand on top of her head and tip it backwards as far as possible. This was my favorite shot from the session—and the image title seemed natural.

Using Multiple Textures

I used multiple textures, which gave the image a somewhat heavy vignette. I decided that the model needed to be in the lower right corner of the photograph so that when your eyes landed on her, your gaze did not leave her figure.

Camera Information

I created this image with a Nikon D700 set at f/8 and 1/125 second with a 32mm lens setting and an ISO of 200.



"I wanted her pose to be very strong with sharp angles, so I had her place her hand on top of her head and tip it backwards as far as possible."



Vintage Stroll

Lighting

I used two 12x56-inch strip lights set at f/8, one on each side of my model. I also placed a 4x6-foot softbox at f/5.6 behind me and the camera, approximately ten feet from the model. She was standing on a white seamless background.

Creating a Theme

This was photographed in my studio as part of a series for a vintage clothing store. As always, I pulled in some of my props to give it a little story. This time it was a small, wicker baby carriage. I photographed the model holding the handle of the carriage, but because of the size of the carriage, she had to hold it up (bottom left). This is not the way you push a carriage. Therefore, I created another image of the carriage all by itself in the correct position on the white background (bottom right).



Textures and Overlays

My first step was to bring in the carriage and enlarge it to make it appear full-sized. I placed the model's hands around the handle.

Using multiple textures and overlays, I created the scene that you see on the facing page (bottom). The "trees" were from fabric that I keep in the studio and occasionally use as a background; parts of them were used to give the look of "Mom" walking the baby through a garden. Placing the leaves of the trees in the upper right and left corners of the photograph created a vignette to keep the viewer's attention on the subject.









Camera Information

Nikon D700 set at f/5.6 at 1/200 second and an ISO of 400 with a 35mm lens.

At a very low opacity, I used stone textures to make the walkway. I also added a sky so that it looked like she was really outside.

The final step was placing two golden layers over the entire image. One was set at the Overlay blending mode; the other was in the Multiply mode.

“My first step was to bring in the carriage and enlarge it to make it appear full-sized. I placed the model's hands around the handle.”



In Turmoil

Lighting

I used natural light while posing my model under a hardwood tree canopy. My model was posed in my Underwater Visual Imaging Tank.

Creating Stress and Turmoil

I brought out the feeling of turmoil with the twists of her body, the uncomfortable poses forming triangles, and the leaves floating in the water. Having the model pose with her hands on her head added to the "stressful" feeling of the image.



Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/6.3 at 1/160 second and an ISO of 400 with a 28mm lens.

Using Citra Solv

I added texture using the Citra Solv technique (see page 32). I took two pages from a *National Geographic* magazine, brushed the Citra Solv onto the pages, and gently pressed them together (being careful not to squish them). I let them sit this way for approximately twenty minutes. The chemical lifted the ink off of the pages and melded the ink from the two pages together. When I peeled the pages apart, I ended up with two different textures. Once they were dry, I photographed the textures and used them in this image. I recommend this technique to anyone who needs a break from the studio but still needs to create images. It's a fun thing to do!

"I recommend this technique to anyone who needs a break from the studio but still needs to create images. It's a fun thing to do!"



Waiting in Suspense

Lighting

This was lit solely with a 4x6-foot softbox to the right of the camera. I wanted to light my subject and the background fairly evenly, knowing that I was going to split this image in post-processing.

Composition

This client requested the belly image with her feet up on the background, which is somewhat common (below). As I edited this session, however, I knew I needed to make it different than what she had seen before. It had to be creative and I wanted to give her something that none of her friends had.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/6.3 at 1/125 second and an ISO of 320 with an 18mm lens setting.





Postproduction

The first step was to split the image in half, copy it and then flip it over to make her identical on both sides. I then erased the center slightly to blend it together and erased part of her legs so that one remained crossed over the other. That was a good beginning, but it needed more.

Next, I flipped the entire image over as if she were hanging from the ceiling, but I needed something to keep her there so I added multiple manacles to her arms and one to her ankle. I copied a part of her hair and dropped it down over

her face as if she were really suspended. The title to this image has a double meaning: she is waiting in suspense because she is literally suspended and because she is awaiting the birth of her child, whose gender was unknown.

Finally, I started playing with textures. Layer one was a bluish texture (Multiply, 45 percent opacity). Layer two was a yellow texture (Multiply, 85 percent opacity). This was followed by a greenish brown texture (Luminosity, 25 percent opacity, 73 percent fill). I erased part of the center of this texture so that it would make a vignette to the overall image. I finished it with a pinkish marble texture (Overlay, 71 percent opacity, 85 percent fill) and added a coordinating brown mat.



Feeling Disconnected

Setup and Lighting

I placed my model in the Underwater Visual Imaging Tank, which was filled with milk. I used natural lighting from the shade of a large tree. I also had the tan house reflecting on the right side of the subject, which added a small amount of light to that side.

Camera Information

I created this image with a Nikon D800 set at f/4 at 1/200 second with a 28mm lens and an ISO of 320.



Pose and Title

When I saw this image right out of the camera, I knew I had created something wonderful. I love that the crossed-arms pose gives a guarded feel to the image. It added to the disconnected feel. I deliberately posed her hands flat and not at all soft or feminine, as if she were saying, "Stay away." I also like the illusion that her head appears disconnected from her body because of the milk. I felt the title was the perfect fit.

Cropping

This image was created with me standing on a tall ladder above the subject's head, photographing down on her. I had originally photographed this full length, but when I was editing I realized that it lent itself to a close crop. I decided to turn the image around so that the viewer would be looking at her right-side-up. However, the image still felt very static to me, so I started playing with tilting her a little bit. I chose to tip her slightly toward the negative space on the left to add movement and a little extra tension in the overall image. The final image has her tipped to the left, with her body position on the far right.

After I placed her head in the top right one-third of the image, there was still something missing. I played with several textures and ended up applying the distressed texture seen in the final image to the entire image except for her face. I felt using this texture kept the viewer within the image by the use of the vignette and the lines.



“This image was created with me standing on a tall ladder above the subject’s head, photographing down on her.”

A Moment Alone

Lighting and Setup

My model was photographed at midday in my outdoor studio with natural light under a pop-up white canopy. I wrapped my model in white cheesecloth and posed her outside against a mottled light background.



Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/8 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 400 with a 70mm lens.

Creating the Pose

Looking for a very peaceful feel to this image, I directed my subject to cross her arms, look down over her shoulder, and close her eyes. I asked her to "hunch" her shoulders a bit and the image was created.

Finishing Touches

After converting the image from color to black & white, I felt that the image needed to be tilted a bit from the way it was originally photographed. I cropped it tight to accentuate the emotion while allowing the viewer to make their own story.

"After converting the image from color to black & white, I felt that the image needed to be tilted a bit from the way it was originally photographed."



Levitation

Camera and Lighting

I shot this image at 10:00AM in my outdoor studio under my pop-up canopy with sunlight coming in from the left.

How to Levitate a Model

I made the model's top and headband out of bubble-wrap shipping material and plastic strips fashioned together using packing tape. This is the same technique I used for the *Elegant Egrets* image on page 10. I posed the model on her toes in a deep plié, turning her head toward the natural light source. Her feet were hidden behind the plastic material to create the illusion of her floating.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/7.1 at 1/160 second and an ISO of 250 with a 20mm lens setting.



Postproduction

Highlights were added to the image using Photoshop's Dodge tool with a soft brush, sweeping over the existing highlights to brighten them. I also added a shadow beneath the subject by the using the Burn tool on 50 percent exposure and brushing over the ground to make the shadow appear real. The image was converted to black & white with LucisArt.

"I made the model's top and headband out of bubble-wrap shipping material and plastic strips fashioned together using packing tape."



Safe Haven

Lighting

I photographed the model under an open sky with natural light using only one 4x6-foot silver reflector. The reflector was placed to the right of the camera and feathered to add a pop of highlight to the shadow side of her face. It was an overcast day following a storm, so I needed all the light I could get. It is very rare (other than using the occasional flashlight) for me to use anything more than a reflector on location to add light.



Camera Information

The image was created with a Nikon D800 at f/7.1 and 1/320 second and an ISO of 400 with a 180mm lens.

Finding the Best Look

This huge tree was pulled up and out of the ground, exposing the entire root-mass after a violent wind storm. I had my model climb to the top of the roots and I started posing her.

When I find a location or have an idea, my goal is to come up with at least three completely different looks. By doing this, I feel that I am making the best use of my model's time and my own time; I do not like coming home and saying "I wish I had . . ."

Nik Silver Effects Pro

I converted the color image to black & white using Nik Silver Effects Pro and added textures for the final effect.

"When I find a location or have an idea, my goal is to come up with at least three completely different looks."



Felicia

A Vintage Look

This is an old-fashioned scene using a vintage nightstand, bowl, mirror, and gown. I love the beautiful light, but I darkened it to make it appear as if it were early morning natural light coming from the windows. I was seeking an old farmhouse grunge feel, which I achieved with layers in Photoshop.

Camera Information

I created this image in my studio with a Nikon D700 set at f/7.1 at 1/160 second with a 22mm lens setting and an ISO of 250.



Backstory

Going to yard sales is a great way to spend a day in New Hampshire. My husband and I were yard sale shopping one day and it started to rain as we were approaching the next house. The family had put blue tarps over all of the tables, but we stopped for a look anyway. My husband lifted the tarp at the first table and we both gasped. Sitting there were two night stands that were amazing! I initially opted to buy only one, but five minutes later—after we had driven away—I told him I wanted the other one as well, so we went back and bought it, too. I have used them for several different types of sessions, including newborn twins, where they were each posed on one of the stands.

Final Steps

There was very little postproduction done for this image. I cropped it to straighten out the tilted table and converted the image to black & white. I then added a brown layer and set the blending mode to Color to give it a warm sepia tone, dropping the opacity just a little bit. Lastly, I added a texture of a peeling wall to make it appear to be an old house.

> “I darkened it to make it appear as if it were early morning natural light . . .”



The Black Swan

Lighting

I created this image in my studio using a 4x6-foot softbox to the right of the camera and a 4x6-foot silver reflector to the left of the camera. I used a light gray v-flat, which consists of two polystyrene boards that are taped together to make a corner (or a "v"), as my background.

Creating Something Different

This fun client was interested in something different and wanted to play and experiment with images. She arrived at the studio wearing a tank top and I had the tutu and feathers. These giant feathers have been used for many different sessions; in this case, they made great wings.

Posing

I love mixing up arms, hands, and legs, making it appear as if they just fell that way—even though they were placed in specific positions.

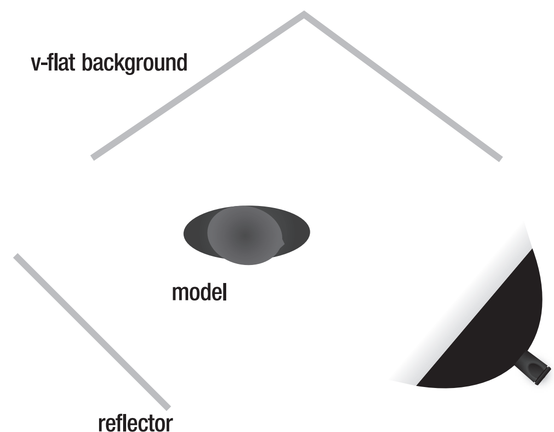


Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/8 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 320 with a 48mm lens setting.

Finishing the Photograph

The first step was to remove the line between the two background panels. Then I started tweaking the feathers so that they matched a little better. I retouched her skin and applied Imagenomic's Portraiture plug-in, which softens and helps to smooth the skin. The last step was to work with the texture overlays to warm it all up and give the image dimension.





“The last step was to work with the texture overlays to warm it all up and give the image dimension.”

Mermaid Folk Art





Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/5 and 1/250 second and an ISO of 320 with a 32mm lens setting.

Lighting and Setup

I shot the original image with natural light in my outdoor studio. My model was in my Underwater Visual Imaging Tank against a white background.

Gaining the Proper Perspective

I photographed this full-length image from the top rung of a stepladder. The model was in the pool on her left side with her hands positioned to complete the circular effect of this image, which has a folk art feeling to me.

I had worked with this young lady before and knew she had a love of Disney movies, so when I started thinking about doing images of a mermaid, I thought of her and her long, red hair. However, when we were discussing the project, she told me that she had just gotten a new tattoo on her arm that started at her shoulder and went down to her elbow. To cover the tattoo, I had a sleeve made that matched the tail.

Liquify and Clone

To achieve the effect I was seeking, I added the extra hair from an image I took earlier in the session. I included many textures and turned her legs into the mermaid's tail using Photoshop's Liquify and Clone tools. I made the sun rays by duplicating the image and changing the blending mode to Multiply. Then I carefully erased around my model, sweeping away the darkness to make it appear as though light was streaking through the water.



“I carefully erased around my model, sweeping away the darkness to make it appear as though light was streaking through the water.”

Into the Woods

Lighting

I used natural light while posing my model under a tree canopy with a 4x6-foot silver reflector to get a sparkle of light into her eyes.

Camera Information

I used a Nikon D800 set at f/4 and 1/40 second and an ISO of 640 with my lens at 35mm.



Backstory

This image was created for my Fairytale series. This is a full-length version in a second location for Snow White (see page 40). When I am photographing for my personal themed sessions, I try to use two or three different locations as well as two or three poses or looks. This way, when I get back to the studio to edit, I have plenty of options. This also means that I need to plan ahead and have a list of ideas that I use as a guide and a place to start. Once we get started, my mind starts developing other ideas or directions to go with the story, but I like starting with a direction and then expanding on it.

The Importance of Colors

I used color to accent the path leading to the pine trees in the background. I selected colors from the leaves and trees in the background and used a soft brush to paint some of those hues onto the path to direct the viewer's eyes. I also highlighted the light side of the trees using the Dodge tool and darkened the shadow sides of the trees with the Burn tool. Finally, I added a light vignette to keep the viewer's gaze within the frame.

"Once we get started, my mind starts developing other ideas or directions to go with the story . . ."



Ode to Monet

Lighting

I photographed my model in the forest with the September sun filtering through the trees at 1:00PM, using only the natural light and a 4x6-foot silver reflector.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/5.6 and 1/100 second and an ISO of 500 with a 68mm lens setting.



Creating a Monet-Inspired Image

This portrait is part of my Belly Couture line. I made the gown on-site by wrapping fabric around the client after we hiked to the location. The model was eight months pregnant and I framed her using the blocks of sunlight as it hit the forest floor. I loved the Monet feel of the image with the light trickling through the trees and the painterly feel to it.

After the Shutter Clicks

Because this image felt Monet-inspired, I decided to emphasize that look with the textures I applied during postproduction. I also cropped the image tighter than my original and moved my subject from the center of the photograph to the left side of the frame.

“I made the gown on-site by wrapping fabric around the client after we hiked to the location.”



Natural Beauty

Lighting

My subject was photographed under a white pop-up tent in my yard with natural light and a 4x6-foot silver reflector.

Styling

The wreath for her headpiece was made of silk flowers on a wire frame. I dressed my model in cheesecloth and posed her against a yellow mottled background.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/8 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 400 with a 78mm lens setting.



Posing

My model was a dancer, so this delicate hand positioning came very naturally to her. Tilting her body away from the camera and bringing her right hand up to her shoulder gave her enough movement to add interest to the image and some curves to her thin, petite frame. I chose to have her face looking into the camera, making direct eye contact with the viewer.

Adding the Finishing Touches

I accentuated her eyes and added a textured edge, working off her light skin and red hair. The edges were burned in to keep the viewer's gaze within the frame. I changed the composition after I decided that this needed to be a square crop. I also made versions in black & white as well as sepia tone and could not decide which I liked better.

Here's a good tip: Name your texture layers as you go. That way, if you decide to erase more off of one later, or need to add a portion of one back, you know where to find it.

"I chose to have her face looking into the camera, making direct eye contact with the viewer."





Jungle Maiden

Lighting

We went to a local park where I photographed my model with natural light under an open sky using a 4x6-foot silver reflector.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/8 and 1/320 second and an ISO of 400 with a 38mm lens setting.



After the Storm

A microburst wind event took down several large trees in a park about a mile from my home. After I saw the damage, I located a model to pose the very next day, knowing that the cleanup process would be undertaken quickly. There were about eight different locations that could have been used, but the natural light was perfect for this tree at the moment of capture. This is the entire root of an enormous tree that was completely uprooted. My husband found the branch she is lying on as an added element. It accentuated the shape of her body and gave her stability.

Tones and Title

I love how the light-colored dress and her light-blond hair make her pop within the image and bring the viewer to her. The title comes from the fact that I felt that this image had a jungle feel.

Postproduction

After photographing this image in color, I felt that it would have more impact in black & white. I extended the trees and added sky, using Lucis-Art to add some clarity and soften the image. I also used Imagenomic's Portraiture plug-in to aid in smoothing her skin.



Remembering Summers Past

Lighting

These images were both made with natural light in the shade of the tree canopies over the river.

Improvisation

As the bed was being loaded into the truck for the water session, I grabbed a large frame at the last minute, not knowing for sure what I would do with it. Once we got on-site, I removed the lace canopy top and hung the frame from the canopy brace. The session began with images of the model posed in the stream below the bed location. Following my rule about working on three different location poses per assignment, I made



Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/7.1 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 500 with an 85mm focal length.



Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/7.1 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 1250 with an 125mm focal length.



multiple exposures of her: close-up, mid-length, and full length from a distance. My favorite was the full length of the model with some of the surrounding river. That's the one I chose to include in the frame.

Postproduction

I processed the "framed" image and the main image separately. I wanted the framed image to have a warm and textural feel to it—as if it were a portrait hanging on a wall. For an overlay, I selected one of the small canvases in my collection that I paint when I need a certain background for an image.

For an ethereal effect, I darkened the trees, added a vignette, and boosted the highlights. To darken the trees, I made a Lasso selection around them, then inverted that selection. In the Curves dialog box, I pulled down the center of the line and pulled up the highlights at the top-right corner. This darkened the trees and added a punch to the highlights as well. I then used a layer mask to erase the parts where I did not want to see this effect.

Lastly, I dropped the standing image into the frame and flattened the two images together to create the final photograph.

> "I made multiple exposures of her: close-up, mid-length, and full length from a distance."

Field of Dreams



Lighting

I photographed my model sitting in a chair in a field using natural light on a slightly overcast day.

Just in Case

I had been photographing this young woman with her horse—but when the horse decided that he had posed enough for one day, I photographed her alone. I always bring extra items along to location sessions for "just in case" opportunities, should they arise. This gives me the potential for added creative expression. I brought this interesting chair that matched the vintage clothing she was wearing, which we had discussed during the consultation.

Camera Information

I created this image with a Nikon D700 at f/5.6 and 1/160 second with a 75mm focal length and ISO 400.



Flipping the Image

I flipped the model so the image would "read" correctly as we view it from left to right. By flipping the image, the viewer's eye is led in toward the young woman, rather than following the lines of her legs out of the photograph. It is simply an art piece.



“I always bring extra items along to location sessions for ‘just in case’ opportunities, should they arise . . .”

Autumn's Rest

Being Innovative

After I wrapped my model in cheesecloth, I tried different angles posing her in the pool. I was finding myself photographing the same angles every time I used the Underwater Visual Imaging Tank, so this time I made an extra effort to twist and move the model to a feminine pose, keeping curves everywhere. If it bent, I bent it—which gave a great arch to her back. I sprinkled leaves for a "natural" texture, and enhanced the image with the reflection of the sky in the water's surface. I shot the image with natural light.



Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/6.3 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 400 with a 28mm lens setting.

World of Photoshop

Using Photoshop, I changed the position of my model, making the image horizontal, rather than vertical.

I converted the image to sepia tone by adding a new layer. I filled this layer with a warm, brown tone, then scrolled down to select Color from the blending modes and adjusted the opacity to my preference. Below, you can see an in-progress version of the image.



To add a vignette, I made a selection using the Lasso tool, then inversed it and used the Curves to darken it to my taste.



Simply Black & White

Setup and Lighting

I created the original images in my outdoor studio with my Underwater Visual Imaging Tank. I used a 4x6 foot reflector to one side of the women to add a bit of sparkle in their eyes. I wanted very flat lighting for these images, using just the light that I had under the tree cover.

Creating the Image in My Mind

This idea began with the woman in white. I did an entire session with this model submerged in the pool with water, using a white background. I then added about six gallons of milk to the pool. She was wrapped in white cheesecloth and we tied her hair back to keep it simple. I stood on a ladder and photographed her from above, looking down. The images ranged from her being barely in the milk to some where she was almost completely immersed. After the session, I chose a handful of my favorite images and then let the project sit for a while.

Two weeks later, I was having a sleepless night and my mind was racing. That's when it came to me that I needed to photograph this session a second time—but this time with a fair-skinned woman all in black in the same poses.

When the model arrived, I showed her prints of my favorites from the first session so she could see the poses I wanted. The prints also served as a guide for me to ensure I did not forget any of the preferred poses. I dyed some cheesecloth black and wrapped her in the same fashion as the first woman—but this time I photographed her on a

Camera Information

Both images were created with a Nikon D800 and a Nikon AF-S Nikkor 28–300mm f/3.5 lens. I shot at 1/200 second and the ISO was 320 for both women. The woman in white was photographed at f/4.5; the woman in black was photographed at f/5.6.









black background in the water. I thought about using something to darken the water, but I was afraid that would stain her skin. I knew I could darken the water in postproduction.

When you are photographing someone in milk, make sure it is not a hot, humid day. By the time we were about an hour into the session, the odor was *bad*. Even after I emptied the pool (all over my front lawn and down the driveway into the street), the smell lingered!

Postproduction

In both images, I used Curves to darken the darks and whiten the whites, being careful not to lose detail in the clothing. It was important to me not to get rid of too much of the detail; I did not want them to fade into the water.

I cleaned up stray hairs using the Clone tool and smoothed the skin with the Clone tool and Imagenomic's Portraiture plug-in—just a little, to keep the texture of the pores in the skin. I also used the Dodge and Burn tools to add some sparkle to the eyes. I finished with just a touch of LucisArt on some areas to make sure that their pores and the water/milk drops on their skin remained visible. This was part of an album that received a 97 at the New Hampshire PPA Print Competition and awarded me the highest scoring album/print of the show. It was also awarded inclusion in PPA's Loan Collection.

Gypsy

Lighting

Shooting in my studio, I used a 4x6-foot softbox with a reflector and a yellow tinted background to create this image.

Posing and Design

I made the shirt by wrapping fabric on top of a leotard around her waist and legs. I styled the model's hair by adding a feather and had her hold another feather for continuity. I posed the model to direct the viewer into the feathers (the only red item in the image), up to her face, down her arm to her elbow, and over to the feather and back around—landing on her face as she makes eye contact with the viewer.

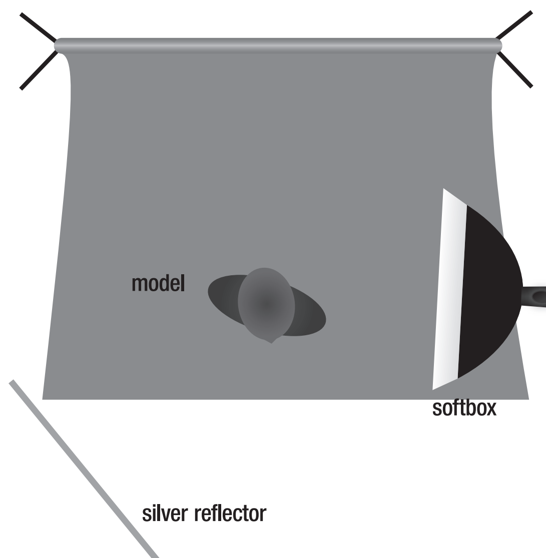
Camera Information

I created this image with a Nikon D700 at f/8 and 1/125 second with a 28mm lens setting and an ISO of 320.



Finessing the Image

Although I photographed her full length, cropping the image made it more of a portrait and more age-appropriate. The viewer can see the little girl's eyes better in the close-up, and that was one of my favorite parts of this image. Leaving some negative space (placing her in the right one-third of the image rather than in the center) made it stronger and added interest. I completed the image with textures, edges, and dodging/burning to give the fabric top a shiny appearance.





"Although I photographed her full length, cropping the image made it more of a portrait and more age-appropriate."

Sleeping Beauty

Lighting

We photographed this at a river location with diffused natural light shining down through a tree canopy. I placed a diffuser to camera right and a 4x6-foot silver reflector to camera left. I used the reflector and diffuser to aid in creating the desired





lighting effects, giving me beautiful, warm reflections in the water.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/7.1 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 500 with a 65mm lens setting.

Patience Is a Virtue

This image from my Fairytale series was at least seven months in the making. The sayings, "Go big or go home!" and "How hard can it be?" are both appropriate for how I accomplished this particular session.

I scouted locations for days before the session to make certain the light and water levels would be correct for the assignment. The window for the correct lighting at this particular site was narrow due to the tree canopy and the position of the sun. The location was very difficult to access because of steep, rocky banks and a bridge that frequently had cars passing by.

Setup

The bed, mattress, and box spring were carried down the banks in pieces and assembled on-site



in the river with rocks used to level out the bed in the river (see photo on the facing page).

The bedding, canopy, and pillows were then placed on the bed. I had purchased the used canopy bed the previous year and bought the vintage sheets and pillow casings at local yard sales. (The vintage canopy covering was purchased for only $4.00!) I dressed the model in a vintage pink gown to accentuate her red hair.

Postproduction

As I had done with *Remembering Summers Past* (see page 94), I darkened the trees, added vignette, and boosted the highlights. To do this, I made a Lasso selection, inverted it, and then used the Curves to pull down the midtones (center of the curve line) and boost the highlights (top right corner of the curve line).

Mermaid Victoria

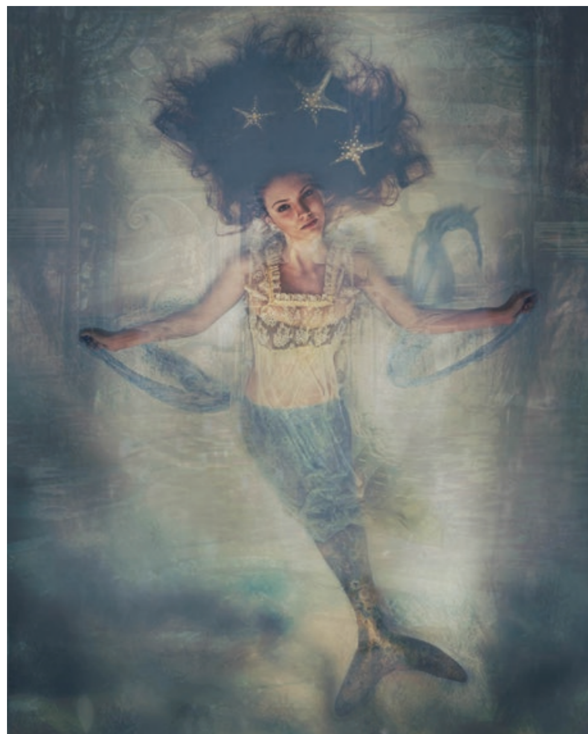
Lighting and Setup

This image was created while I was teaching one of my fine art classes. I shot it in my outdoor studio with my model posed in my Underwater Visual Imaging Tank against a white background.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/11 at 1/200 second and an ISO of 400 with a 28mm focal length.





The natural lighting for this image emanated from the sun; we shot in the open shade under a tree.

Styling and Composition

My model was wearing a vintage gown. I added cheesecloth for movement as she swooshed her hands through the water. I also placed starfish throughout her hair for decoration and pulled her hair all around her head so that it was very full with volume.

This image was photographed as a full-length composition in a vertical format, but it was later

> “My model was wearing a vintage gown. I added cheesecloth for movement as she swooshed her hands through the water.”



cropped to a tight horizontal for the final presentation. An alternative full-length vertical image (see facing page, top) was also created, but my preference was ultimately for the horizontal version of the photograph (above).

Postproduction

Most of the postproduction for this image was similar to the approach used in *Mermaid Folk Art* (see page 84). I included many textures and turned her legs into the mermaid’s tail using the Liquify and Clone tools.

Queen of Hearts

Backstory

This image comes from my Fairytale series. It began with an exposure I saved from a regular session. I am continually learning new techniques in Photoshop and will sometimes go back to my old images and think of new things to do with them. I wasn't sure what I was going to do with this image until I started piecing textures together.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/8 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 250 with a 35mm lens.



Lighting

I photographed the model in my studio. I used a 4x6-foot softbox and 4x6-foot silver reflector, although it was only important that I light one side of her face well; I already had in mind that I was going to split the image and flip it to make a symmetrical image in postproduction.

Creating the Final Image

All of the post-processing was done in Photoshop, using textures from fabric that was in the original image. My first step was to copy and flip half of the original image, erasing the hands so that one overlapped the other. I removed the yellow and red tones in her skin and cut and pasted textures over her body, erasing parts that were unnecessary to the image. I then duplicated half of the textures and flipped it over to the other side and erased what I did not need. I used several different textures and just kept piecing it all together to make the gown. Painting with red on a layer set to Color (at about 50 percent opacity), I added a couple of hearts to the image. I continued to tweak and play until I was satisfied.



Floating in My Dreams

Camera and Lighting

I shot this image with the model posed in my Underwater Visual Imaging Tank. It was created using natural light only. As with *Feeling Disconnected* (see page 72), this image was created with me standing on a tall ladder above the subject's head, photographing down on her.

Camera Information

I created this image with a Nikon D700 at f/5 and 1/125 second with an 18mm lens and an ISO of 500.



Concept

I imagined this as a woman sleeping and dreaming while wearing a romantic vintage gown. I wanted to see her hair flowing and to have a soft expression on her face.

Final Touches

After viewing the image as I had photographed it, I realized that I really preferred the way it felt when I turned it 180 degrees. I chose to leave the wrinkles in the background as an added texture to the image. Another "organic" texture in the image included ripples from the rain that started falling as soon as we got her set up. I found that the circles they made on the surface of the water were a nice element. The reflection of the trees on the water was another wonderful addition to the image!

To perfect this image, I used several textured layers in Photoshop. I added warmth to her skin and to the background, improved the sense of depth to the image, and added a vignette to the final composition.



Leaving the Ball

Lighting

This image was created on the grounds of a local private school after sunset. I used a hand-held, one-million candlepower flashlight with a blue gel covering it to daylight-balance the skin tones.

Camera Information

Nikon D800 on a tripod set at f/4.5 and 1/100 second and an ISO of 1600 with a 42mm lens setting.



Location Can Be the Key

This is a second location from the Cinderella session (see page 54). This gives the full-length perspective with a visual of the location. I loved the size of the doorway and felt it needed to be in the image for several reasons: size comparison, location, to put the subject in the lower right third of the image, to make her the obvious focal point, and to add a natural frame. The posing for this image needed to be princess-like: pretty, fancy and feminine. The hands are very important in regular portraiture and can make or break an image, but when you are telling a story it is imperative to pay attention to that detail along with expression.

Final Touches

After I flipped the image, placing my model in the lower right, I played with the lights and darks. I kept the subject the lightest part of the portrait, bringing the attention of the viewer straight to her. I played with the Dodge and Burn tools and bumped up the exposure slightly in Lightroom. LucisArt was used to pop the dark tones in the stone in the background and the Imagenomic Portraiture plug-in was used to soften her skin. I also like to use the Whyath tool in LucisArt because it gives a sharpened look to the image.



The Farmer's Daughter

Lighting

This image was created in my outdoor studio with natural light under a pop-up white canopy at midday.

Props

I posed my model holding a grass bundle in front of a light-colored background on a large basket that I had flipped upside down. The color and tone of the basket matched the colors and tone of the image. I was meticulous with the hand placement and had her look away so the viewer would be directed to look around and explore the image, rather than becoming locked on her face.

When I buy props for the studio, it is important that they have multiple uses. Sometimes I am not sure what that will be, but I always figure it out. This particular basket was originally purchased to hold multiple babies for portraits. On this day, however, I needed something interesting for the model to sit on, so I flipped it over and it became a chair! It was a perfect fit for the image and much easier to move around than a giant rock.

Adding and Using Textures

I like to play with textures; I feel they add depth to an image. They are fun to work with and you can add as many as you like using the various layer blending modes to give a different look with each one. I also use the color of the texture layer as an added element to the image. However, you can easily covert a texture layer to black & white before applying it to the main image to keep the image from picking up the texture layer's colors. Play with them, have fun with them—and don't take them too seriously!

Camera Information

I used my Nikon D800 set at f/9 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 400 with a 60mm lens.



For this image, I added textures in the Multiply blending mode and created a vignette. The warm tones in the texture layers were used to coordinate with the model's hair and skin tone.



Making Plans for Saturday Night

Lighting

Working in the studio, my subject was lit using 12x56-inch strip lights on either side of her and a 4x6-foot softbox directly in front of her.

Props and When to Use Them

This is part of my Vintage series—showing the model as a cross between a Vargas girl and a Norman Rockwell painting. I used a white seamless background and my model wore a vintage gown as she sat on the vintage nightstand holding an old-fashioned telephone. (When I am not photographing, one of my favorite pastimes is antique shopping and going to yard sales. I have often found props that inspired future themes.)

For this session, we experimented for a little bit until I found what I was trying to achieve. I love her expression and how much fun she appeared to be having talking to a friend on the telephone.

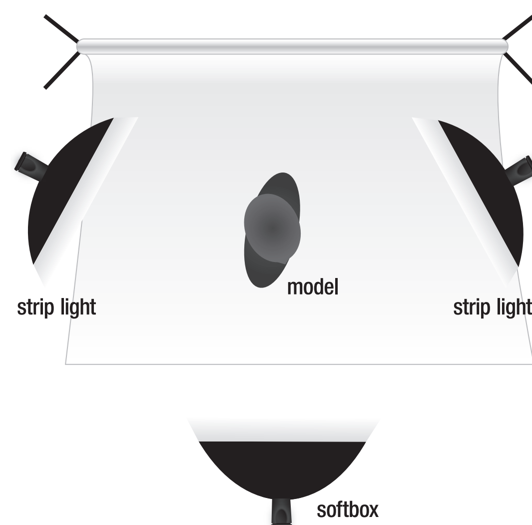
Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/10 @ 1/250 second and an ISO of 250 with a 24mm lens.



Curves and Saturation

The saturation of this image was dropped down in Photoshop by playing with the Curves and Saturation. Then, I added a yellow overlay.





Snow White

Lighting

We photographed in a forest setting at 5:00PM with natural light filtered through the trees. She is beautifully backlit by the natural light coming through the trees. I had extensively scouted this area, so I knew at what time the sun's angle would be perfect to accomplish this look. A 4x6-foot silver reflector was placed to the right of the camera, which I feathered a little so that there would not be any harsh light on her face. I also used a one-million candlepower flashlight with a blue plastic shopping bag over the light to cut the warmth. This was also feathered.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D800 set at f/5 and 1/10 second and an ISO of 640 with a 78mm lens.



Composing the Theme

This is another image from my Fairytale series. The model wore my wedding dress, and I fashioned her cape from a curtain. I had her hold an apple, complete with a bite out of it. There is another pose/location from this assignment in which I had the model sitting with the apple as a sweet and innocent portrait of Snow White.

Sometimes, It's Good the Way It Is

This particular image is almost straight out of the camera. I tweaked it just a tiny bit using Photoshop's Curves, making it a little brighter overall. I also added some yellow and applied Imagenomic's Portraiture plug-in to make her skin a little creamier and smoother.

"I had extensively scouted this area, so I knew at what time the sun's angle would be perfect to accomplish this look."



Ophelia

Camera and Setup

I shot this under a pine branch and a hardwood tree canopy with natural light. My model got down into my Underwater Visual Imaging Tank to pose for the image.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/6.3 and 1/160 second and an ISO of 400 with a 28mm lens.



Bringing Nature Into an Image

I used the reflection of the leaves, tree branches, and sky as the first texture on the surface of the water. I had my model hold a pine branch in her hand to bring more nature into the image. I felt this was a strong enough image to enter into competition, but it did not have a name until the night before when a friend came up with the title *Ophelia*, which conveyed the story of the image to the judges.

Blue Version

Revisiting this image after naming it *Ophelia*, I felt it needed to be darkened—as well as colder and more lifeless. I felt that changing it to cold, blue tones would add to the "dead" feeling of the image (facing page, bottom).

Final Steps

I added water rings and bubbles to emphasize the water and changed the format from the original vertical to horizontal for the final image. I used textures from magazine art using the Citra Solv technique (see page 68). Again, I gave the image a blue hue for the final presentation.

"I used the reflection of the leaves, tree branches, and sky as the first texture on the surface of the water."





Let Me Drown in My Tears

Camera and Lighting

This image was shot under a tree with my model in the Underwater Visual Imaging Tank. I stood on a stepladder, photographing down on the model.

Camera Information

This image was created with a Nikon D700 set at f/5 and 1/125 second and an ISO of 500 with a 44mm lens.



A Cold, Rainy Day

It started raining as soon as we began this session; fortunately my model was a trooper and stuck it out! The temperature was only 55 degrees—and she was shivering and her lips were turning purple, but she persevered. The rain made her squint, but the texture the raindrops added to the surface was amazing. I felt that the reflection from the leaves overhead on the water surface added even more dimension to this image.

Postproduction

I used the Saturation tool, playing with the yellow and red to warm her skin slightly. I then placed a tear under one of her eyes and turned her lips down just a little in postproduction. The title of the image suits the sense that this young woman is lying in a puddle of sadness.

“The title of the image suits the sense that this young woman is lying in a puddle of sadness.”



Who's the Fairest of Them All?

Lighting

To light the image of the queen, I used two 12x56-inch strip lights and a 4x6-foot softbox, plus a 4x6-foot silver reflector.

Working an Idea

This is from my Fairytale series. The queen was the original image, but I felt I needed more for the story so I went searching for a mirror and found this one at a yard sale for $2.00. Then the owner mentioned the table (for $5.00), and I knew that would work, too! The queen's costume was purchased off the shelf at a discount after Halloween. The crown was purchased on-line. The plastic apple came from a craft store.



When I mentioned I needed a "man in the mirror," my husband volunteered. He held a flashlight under his chin in our darkened bathroom and I captured his reflection with an iPhone.

Camera Information

The queen's image was created with a Nikon D800 at f/5.6 at 1/200 second and an ISO of 320. I used a 28mm lens.



Finishing the Image

I copied half of the queen's body, flipping it and lining it up carefully with the other half. I then erased out the "line" you get with this technique. To make everything uniform, I only erased some of the second half—keeping the flipped hands, face, and collar but blending everything else.

I adjusted her head position and accentuated her lips using Liquify. I then added a wood-tone floor, blending it with the brown background.

I used the same mirroring technique for my husband's face, then added different colors and smoke to make it appear mystical. I placed the face in the glass of the mirror and added these elements to the wall behind the queen. Initially, I put some space between the queen and the mirror, but it felt too disconnected. I repositioned it with some overlap behind her shoulder.

The table added a third element to the image that would keep the viewer's attention, looking from the table to the mirror to the queen. However, I still felt it needed something, so I added the apple on the table—with the needed bite taken out of it to complete the story. I finished with an overall texture to tie all the elements together and give them a cohesive look.



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—Steve Bedell, M.Photog.Cr and international print juror

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PUBLISHER OF PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS
PO Box 586, Buffalo, NY 14226
www.AmherstMedia.com

ISBN-13: 978-1608957675



$27.95 USA
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#2037